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Senate approves effort to replace MEAP test

LANSING – The Senate Wednesday approved legislation that would replace the Michigan Educational Assessment Program test for high-school students with a test based on a college-entrance exam and tie the Michigan Merit Award Scholarship to the results of the new test, announced Sen. Van Woerkom, a package sponsor.

Van Woerkom sponsored Senate Bill 1156, which would require an 11th-grade student, beginning in the 2006-2007 school year, to receive qualifying results in each subject area component of the new test in order to be eligible for a Michigan Merit Award Scholarship.

“The Michigan Merit Award Scholarship is a good tool to ensure students are receiving the tools they need to be successful in Michigan’s 21st Century economy. My bill improves the scholarship program by using a national test that is recognized by colleges and universities,” said Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores.

The proposed test, called the Michigan Merit Exam, would use a combination of a college-admissions test, a workplace skills exam and a social-studies component. The test would first be given to students in 2007. The effort is supported by a broad coalition of state leaders in secondary and post-secondary education. The college-admissions test to be used isn’t specified in the legislation.

The change is needed because the MEAP turnaround time is too long for teachers to take advantage of results to improve student achievement. Colleges and universities also do not consider it when making admissions decisions.

The legislation now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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